



Wolvercote Commoners' NEWSLETTER June 2017

Horse Grazing on Port Meadow & Wolvercote Common

The grazing of horses and cattle on Port Meadow and Wolvercote Common is a right and privilege of the Freemen of Oxford and Commoners living in Wolvercote. These rights go back many years and, although many have relinquished them over the years, there are quite a number of people who still retain them. Although the animals range free their welfare is always at the forefront. To this end the Commoners have always had a horse warden who maintains a watch. Unfortunately some horses were recently found to be clearly in need of urgent attention as they were showing signs of severe neglect.

Following the incident the Freemen, the Port Meadow Ranger and the Commoners have issued this statement:

Recently 3 horses on the Common were impounded by the Port Meadow Ranger working with the Commoners Horse Warden. The animals had serious welfare issues around the state of their hooves. Whilst the animals were not owned by Commoners they were grazing on the rights of Commoners. The Port Meadow Ranger will not hesitate to impound any animals that have agreed welfare issues. In addition any costs associated will be recovered from the grazier or any Commoner who has let their rights.

Wolvercote Common and Port Meadow are unique and we must all work together to secure its heritage and future.

Incidents like this damage the good reputation of all who graze the Common and Meadow. The title 'Commoner' is a right and a privilege but with the rights come responsibilities that we will not ignore.

This underlines one of the responsibilities of the Commoners' Committee in appointing a horse warden to our group to maintain a watch of the horses.

However, if anyone ever has a serious cause for concern about any of the animals on the Meadow and Common they should contact the Oxford City Council 01865 252240

Date for your diary

Our next Commoners' OpenTalk will be '**Oxford's Floodplain Meadow Wildlife**' by Judy Webb, which takes place at 7.30pm on June 29th at the Baptist Church Hall. Judy is a local ecologist specializing in recording the flowering plants, fungi and invertebrates of the meadows and will outline the importance of the flora and fauna on the Meadow and Common.

Playground gets 'Summer Shade'



A few years ago, my wife Annie (Peppiatt) realised that there was no shade for children on the children's Play Area, so asked me if the WCC could plant a tree for shade. When Alex, my son, recently died in a tree-surgery accident I offered to fund this as a memorial to him, especially as it would be visible from my home. Recently we planted a Field Maple, seen here showing its first flush of leaves, which will soon be giving shelter to children during our long hot summers(?).

(Paul Kirkley)

May workday gets a new recruit



Yet another busy Commoners' workday session, wielding scythes and rakes to clear some of the long grass on the northern end of Wolvercote Green and this time joined by our newest recruit, 6 year old Jack. He soon proved to be an expert with a rake and quickly had neat piles of grass to show for it. Little does he know that we'll soon have him brushing-up digging skills!

Don't forget Village Work Mornings second Saturday of every month

Meet outside the Village Hall at 10am (Bring gloves/wellies). Children welcome

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Chair: Angie Goff (01865 554040) Secretary: Mary Brown (01865 236897)